

APPENDIX V  
UTAH FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS  
UTAH BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE. FOR UTAH BIRD RECORDS CODING ONLY.

Lat/long \_\_\_\_\_ Record type \_\_\_\_\_ Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Habitat \_\_\_\_\_ Disposition \_\_\_\_\_ Cx Nos. \_\_\_\_\_

Common Name Eastern Bluebird  
Scientific Name Sialia sialis  
Obs. date Dec. 21, 1989 Time(s) 1100-1107  
Duration of obs. seven minutes  
Distance from bird ~ 20 yds  
Light conditions Full but dappled sun at 10 o'clock thru <sup>Russian Olive</sup> branches.  
Optical equip. 9x30 Nikon binos  
Photo equip. Nikomax EL w/Nikon 800mm lens  
Notes made at time of sighting \_\_\_\_\_ Date report prepared \_\_\_\_\_  
Notes made later from memory  Dec. 23, 1989

Weather at time of this observation.  
Clear, calm, warm (40's, °F).  
Prior weather and number of days since change  
Similar past 2 days. Before then 5-10° F cooler + overcast to scattered clouds for ~ 4 days.  
Locality Behind the Slickrock Campground on the sw side of Hwy 191 ~ 3.6 mile SE of the Hwy 191 Colorado River bridge. UTM: N427242, E62465. Elev.: 3,970 ft (± 20 ft).  
Lat/long block number 18

Enter number of birds in each category.	GENDER(S)	AGES(S)	PLUMAGE(S)	PHOTO(S)
Total number observed.	Males <u>one</u>	Adults <u>one</u>	Breeding _____ Transition _____	Available <u>2?</u>
<u>one</u>	Females _____	Juv/Imms _____	Eclipse _____ Dark phase _____	Enclosed _____
	♀ or Imms _____	2/3 yr birds _____	Winter _____ Light ph. _____	
	Unknowns _____	Unknowns _____	Other _____	

Description of bird: Size, colors, all field marks OBSERVED. - Unique features of this individual, if any.  
Observed all the same details as mentioned in my previous two sightings reports of this species (Dec. 16, 1989 + Dec. 19, 1989), but for shorter instances as I was trying to follow it with an 800mm lens, except this time the rust on the breast did appear to extend a good half inch onto the side of the neck.

UTM: N427238, E62460. Elev.: 3,970 ft (± 20 ft).

Note: Today, Dec. 23, 1989, while observing two Eastern Bluebird adult males at about 1300 for about 4 minutes at the same horse pasture (but on its opposite side), I and Ella Sorensen, et al. (they are each filling out reports this time), all confirmed the rusty sideneck, the darker rust (as opposed to the more orange SEAZ color form), and the fact that the rusty underparts did not extend as far down the center of the belly as shown in the Nat'l Geo. guide (1982 ed.) illustration.

Field marks which were not seen. Why not?

Variations from expected field marks.  
Same as in Dec. 19, 1989 sighting report.  
Note: During the Dec. 23, 1989 sighting, I more clearly saw that the rusty underparts extended down the center of the belly only about as far as in the Golden (1983) Field guide + not as far as shown in the Nat'l Geo. (1983) Field guide.

List similar species and describe why or how you eliminated them.  
See my report of sighting on Dec. 16, 1989.

Behavior of this bird. Other species seen with this one. Any interaction between birds?  
As soon as I confirmed the species after it landed in a young cottonwood, I went after the camera. When I returned, it had moved to the center of a dense Russian Olive tree. It first hopped around in the lower branches (~ 3 ft above the ground) + made two short trips down to the ground. Then it made a longer trip to the ground (~ 10 sec.), returning to perch ~ 2 ft up in the dense foliage, where I was able to get 2 photos while it occasionally preened + once it stretched. Then it went deeper into the tree's foliage + I never saw it again during my remaining 2 hrs + 20 minutes in the immediate area.

Habitat at this location. Adjacent or near by habitat, if significant.  
Same spot as in report of Dec. 19, 1989.

Describe bird's song or sounds.  
None.

Print reporter's name, address, phone number.  
Nelson Boschen  
P.O. Box 20  
Moab, UT 84532  
Phone 801-259-6973  
Signature Nelson Boschen

What is your experience with this or similar birds?  
See my report of sighting on Dec. 16, 1989.

Corroborating observers not reporting separately.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name Signature

APPENDIX V  
UTAH FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS  
UTAH BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE by Nelson Boschen

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE. FOR UTAH BIRD RECORDS CODING ONLY.

Latilong \_\_\_\_\_ Record type \_\_\_\_\_ Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Habitat \_\_\_\_\_ Disposition \_\_\_\_\_ Cx Nos. \_\_\_\_\_

Common Name Eastern Bluebird  
Scientific Name Sialia sialis  
Obs. date Dec. 16, 1989 Time(s) 1600-1604; 1705-1706  
Duration of obs. 5 minutes ↑ ↑  
Distance from bird 40 yds down to 30 yds; then 30 yds  
Light conditions ⊕ sun at 9 o'clock; set sun at 4 o'clock  
Optical equip. Nikon 9x30 binos  
Photo equip. X  
Notes made at time of sighting  Date report prepared  
Notes made later from memory  Dec. 20, 1989

Weather at time of this observation.  
Mostly overcast (⊕) sky, including the sun;  
wind calm; temp. ~ 34° F.

Prior weather and number of days since change  
Cold front arriving ~ 2 days before, bringing overcast  
skies + night lows in the teens, but no precip  
since Nov. 26.

Locality In mature Fremont cottonwoods near Hwy 19  
along north edge of sloughs, Moab, UT.  
UTM: N427332, E62402. Elev.: 3,970 ft (±20 ft).

Latilong block number 18

Enter number of birds in each category.	GENDER(S)	AGES(S)	PLUMAGE(S)	PHOTO(S)
Total number observed.	Males <u>2</u>	Adults <u>2</u>	Breeding _____ Transition _____	Available _____
<u>two</u>	Females _____	Juv/Imms _____	Eclipse _____ Dark phase _____	Enclosed _____
	♀ or Imms _____	2/3 yr birds _____	Winter _____ Light ph. _____	
	Unknowns _____	Unknowns _____	Other _____	

Description of bird: Size, colors, all field marks OBSERVED. - Unique features of this individual, if any.

About 5" or 6" long, or ~ 3" shorter than the Am. Robin that was hassling them. Diagonal perching stance. Upper parts a continuous deep blue field, including tail, wings, back, nape, + head from around the eyes + above. A rich deep rust color tending towards brown (as opposed to orange as in the SEAZ form) covered the entire breast + continued up to the base of the chin (where there was a small pale patch under the lower mandible) + down the flanks, as one solid field (which extended little, if at all, around the sides of the neck under the earpatch + above the shoulder) (the shoulder was all the deep blue, w/ no hint of rust). The belly + undertail coverts were plain white. No eyering or wing bars. There was a distinct division between the rusty breast + the white belly. The rust was not a pale wash. The bill was dark, about the length of the distance between the eye + the base of the upper mandible, relatively thin, + w/ a slight downcurve, especially on top. Eye dark. Tail square-tipped + relatively straight-sided.

After-thought Note: The rusty underparts did not appear to extend as far down the center of the belly as in the Nat'l Geog. Soc. "Field Guide to the Birds of N. Am." (1983 edition), but this is only a recollection after the fact. Not checking the field guide as I watched the birds, the difference did not consciously register.

Field marks which were not seen. Why not?

A more pronounced rusty extension on the sides of the neck may have been partially obscured by my angle of view + the birds' hunched posture.

Variations from expected field marks.

See, plus the rusty underparts did not appear to extend down onto the belly as far as is shown in the Nat'l Geo. Field guide (1983 ed.), but rather more like in the Golden Field guide (1983 edition).

List similar species and describe why or how you eliminated them.

W. Bluebird - My birds had no rusty or in any way dark shoulder patch, no blue throat section, + no dirty belly.

Mtn Bluebird - My birds were too dark blue, + uniformly blue, on all upper parts, + had no blue wash or rusty wash on underparts.

Lazuli Bunting - My birds had no wingbars, black on upper parts, or blue throat.

Behavior of this bird. Other species seen with this one. Any interaction between birds?

For ~3 min., both were simply perched ~3' apart on a thin branch. Then a Robin landed + chased them from branch to branch for a minute, after which the two flew to a different tree behind me. There I watched only a few seconds before they flew away. Returning an hour later, I found them again in the second tree, where I watched them for one minute, at which time I lost them as they flew due to an approaching vehicle.

Habitat at this location. Adjacent or near by habitat, if significant.

A line of about 8 mature cottonwoods extending from an area of brush + tamarisks into an open yard of a residence.

Describe bird's song or sounds. At each tree (whether in flight or not, I don't recall + didn't note), one bird made a two-note call, w/ the notes back-to-back, w/a barely-burly flutelike quality about medium octave, w/ at least the first note sounding like it started w/a soft "b" + each note ending w/a soft sound, something like fbur-fbur. I didn't note if the two notes were different in pitch.

Print reporter's name, address, phone number.

Nelson Boschen  
P.O. Box 20  
Moab, UT 84532  
Phone 801-259-6973

Signature Nelson S. Boschen Jr

What is your experience with this or similar birds?

I have seen this + all the mentioned similar species frequently.

Corroborating observers not reporting separately.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Count Name: Moab, UT  
Count Date: Dec. 16, 1989  
Compiler: Nelson Boschen

Nelson Boschen  
PO Box 20  
Moab, UT 84532

12-1989d

Dear Ella

Enclosed are seven (7) duplicate slides by me of the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*) in Moab, UT, taken on Dec. 19, 1989. They are yours to do with as you wish (throw them away maybe?).

Yes, the quality is disgusting! In my rush to get the originals and the duplicates made, I forgot to specify "Kodak" at the photo outlet, tho the originals are much clearer than these duplicates. So, if replacements are necessary, please let me know which ones, and I'll get Kodak dup's, which I assume would be better. From the present dup's, you can't tell that I actually used a tripod, time delay,  $1/25$  second shutter speed, and F16-22 or F22 on all shots. The camera was an Olympus OM-1 with a Vivatar 85-205mm zoom lens set at 205mm for all shots.

The slides are numbered 18E89 thru 24-E89. The Bluebird at the bottom of #'s 18+19 should be a Mountain Bluebird, but I was too concentrated on the "real" Eastern Bluebird at the time to say for sure. However I think I would have noticed it between shots, as would have the other birder standing nearby with binos the entire time. Thus I think its potential Eastern Bluebird appearance is only due to the angle and lighting.

Sincerely,

Nelson Boschen

P.S. I sent duplicates of the same seven slides also to American Birds with the Moab CBC data (no; actually when I got the dup's 2 weeks later.).

12-1989e  
480

Title: First Reports & Documentation of Eastern Bluebirds in Utah

Author: Nelson Boschen

This Report Prepared: Dec. 24, 1989

Page 1 of 4

To date I have observed the Eastern Bluebird (Sialia sialis), always adult males, on the following four dates, with the numbers and duration of each observation in parentheses: Dec.16,1989 (2 for 5 minutes); Dec.19,1989 (1 for 15 minutes); Dec.21,1989 (1 for 7 minutes); and Dec.23,1989 (2 for 4 minutes). All sightings were made in Moab, Utah, along the northeast edge of the Moab sloughs, at elevation 4,970 feet ( $\pm 20$  feet). These sightings, with or without the documented photos and detailed records, are the first known reports of this species in Utah.

#### Description

They appeared to be 5-6 inches long, or about 3 inches shorter than the nearby Am. Robins. Their perching stance was diagonal, in a squat, very short-necked posture. The upper parts were uniformly on the pale side of dark blue, including the shoulder area, plus the head at and above a line from below the earpatch to the bill. A deep rich opaque rusty color covered the area from the breast/belly junction (as in the Golden 1983 field guide, as opposed to the National Geographic 1983 field guide where it extends onto the belly) up to the chin, which was a small whitish patch. At times, the rust visibly extended onto the sides of the neck as much as perhaps  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch beyond the corner of the folded wing, and the next instant it could be invisible due to a slight change in posture such as a head turn. The visibility of this patch also seemed to decrease as the upward angle of view increased. The rust extended down the flanks where it changed to white, and at the belly it ended sharply, switching to the pure white of the belly and undertail coverts. There were

Title: First Reports & Documentation of Eastern Bluebirds in Utah

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This Report Prepared: Dec. 24, 1989

Page 2 of 4

no wingbars or eyerings. The darker blue and rust areas point to the primary ("eastern"?) subspecies as opposed to the southeastern Arizona subspecies with its paler blue and more orange rust.

A call was heard only on the first day. One bird twice gave a two-note call, with at least the first note sounding like it started with a very soft "b" (as if it was being transmuted into an "f"), and each note ending in a soft sound, something like "fbur-fbur". These two notes were back-to-back, of about  $\frac{1}{2}$  second duration together, and with a barely-burry flutelike quality at about medium octave. I didn't note if the two notes were different in pitch.

#### The Events

On Dec.16, the two were found in a mature Fremont cottonwood grove that straddled the ecotone line of dense tamarisks and a residential yard, where they were not found again on Dec.17 and Dec.19. On the Dec.19 search, I remembered that an area about .86 mile away, where during most CBC's I had found Mountain Bluebirds, was devoid of them on this Dec.16. Since this was possibly due to the presence of about 900 Eur. Starlings and 174 Am. Crows at the same location on Dec.16, and which were now gone, I decided to check that area again.

Both bluebird species were found there on that day and on my two subsequent visits of Dec.21 & 23, with the Mountain Bluebirds' numbers always being 40 or so. The habitat used here was: a horse pasture containing scattered low dried grass clumps and 2-3-foot high stalks of dead annuals, with much of the soil damp to wet from an overflowing irrigation ditch bordering one side; surrounded by fence on all sides; and surrounded by Russian olive trees on two sides and a line of planted young cottonwood trees on the nearest side.

Title: First Reports & Documentation of Eastern Bluebirds in Utah

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This Report Prepared: Dec.24,1989

Page 3 of 4

On all three days the Mountain Bluebirds used the young cottonwoods, the fenceposts, and two nearby Russian olives for perching. On Dec.19 the Eastern Bluebird was perched in two of the young cottonwoods the entire 15 minutes I was present, until the last minute, when all the bluebirds flew up into the tops of the mature cottonwoods in the campground behind me due to an approaching Sharp-shinned Hawk. During my next visit here on Dec.21, after  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour of my 3 hours present, an E. Bluebird landed in one of the young cottonwoods, but shortly moved to one of the nearby Russian olives where for the next 6 minutes it made a few quick trips down to the ground among the tree's dense foliage, after which it perched about 2 feet up in the tree's dense foliage for a short while. Then it disappeared for my remaining 2 hours and 20 minutes there.

During both Dec.19 & 21, the pasture was constantly used by the Mountain Bluebirds for feeding, with the dead stalks of the annuals regularly used as observation posts while feeding. However the E. Bluebirds were never observed either on this ground or on the stalks during either day. This suggested that, though the E. Bluebirds were at times using the same resting perches as the Mountain Bluebirds, they were feeding in a different microhabitat nearby.

So when I arrived on Dec.23 and did not find the E. Bluebirds at the young cottonwoods or in the pasture, I thought it worth while to check the Russian olives on the far side of the pasture, which is where the two of that day were found. First I saw one perched on an exposed Russian olive side branch, but it quickly flew out of view into the heart of the tree's canopy. About a minute later two landed near each other in the topmost branches of a nearer Russian olive, where they remained nicely visible as Ella Sorensen, et al. (I'm lousy at remembering names) and I easily observed and discussed the features.



Title: First Reports & Documentation of Eastern Bluebirds in Utah

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This Report Prepared: Dec.24,1989

Page 4 of 4

Summary & Discussion

At least two separate adult male Eastern Bluebirds were seen. All sightings appeared to be of the darker primary subspecies as opposed to the southeastern Arizona subspecies with its paler blue and more orange rust. Also, the rusty underparts ended at the forward end of the belly as in the Golden field guide instead of continuing onto the belly as in the National Geo. field guide.

Although the E. Bluebirds seen here seem to enjoy the company of Mountain Bluebirds (perhaps mainly due to the absence of others of their own species), and to at least occasionally use the same resting perches, they seem to prefer feeding within and/or under the cover of trees with a dense and low canopy rather than in the open areas frequented by the Mountain Bluebirds. However, at the approach of a potential threat, whether raptor or human, they seem to be in the habit of flying to the uppermost branches of trees (as on Dec.19 & 23), as the Mountain Bluebirds often did.

Thus, though these four occasions were for short periods, they do suggest some starting points for further searches of the E. Bluebird. Not likely to find flocks of their own kind for company here in Utah, they are likely to join flocks of Mountain Bluebirds and occasionally use the same resting perches and high predator-observation perches, but prefer feeding (and probably resting) where there is more cover.